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CHARLES SAYLE

MUSA

CONSOLATRIX

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY DAVID NUTT
IN THE STRAND
1893

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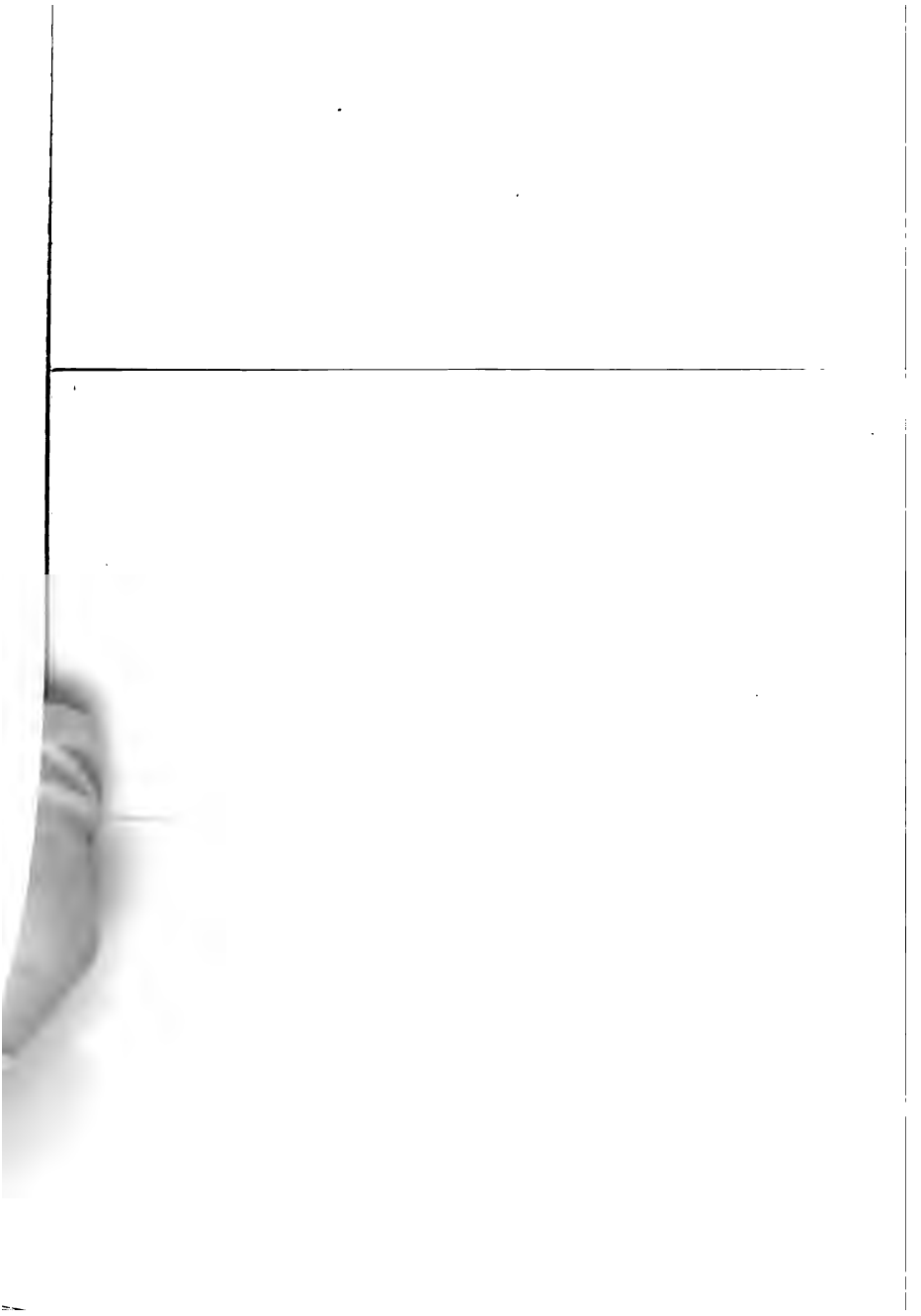

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CHARLES SAYLE

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Φεῦ, φεῦ, τί τούτου χάρμα μεῖζον ἂν λάβοις
Τοῦ γῆς ἐπιψαύσαντα κᾆθ' ὑπὸ στέγῃ
πυκνῆς ἀκοῦσαι ψακάδος εὐδούσῃ φρενί ;

SOPHOCLES, *Tympanistæ.*

TO

JOHN HADEN BADLEY

Dear Badley,

These few verses can add nothing to the regard which, since we sat together at school, I have ever had for you; and they certainly will do nothing to found a reputation for stringing rhymes. But what a few people may care to receive, I am willing to place within their power of possessing.

In asking you to accept the empty honour of a dedication, I am only anxious that those who read me should know: that far above all poetry,—of which you have more in your little finger than I in my whole body,—I have ever valued the friendship which you have allowed to continue now so long.

Ten years ago to-day we launched our first literary cockleshell. May I send you this little memento of that, the pleasantest associations of which are connected with you.—Ever yours affectionately,

C. S.

CAMBRIDGE,
May Day 1893.

TENUI PENNA

TENUI PENNA

Of High Estate let others sing,
  Of Nations' ways and People's strife :
Be mine to tune a lowlier string,
  And break its echoes into life.

For, when I first drew breath, men say
  Love came, one still December night,
And placed a lyre where I lay,
  And vanished godlike from their sight.

And I must sing what songs He will,
  Not strive for others nowise mine :
Whate'er betide, His Minstrel still,
  His Messenger the Thrice-Divine.

So all my life I wait His hest,
Obedient to the Lord of Song ;
Content to sing what seems Him best
To whom my melodies belong.

1888.

VATES

VATES

He hears dim voices in the void
That call to his fine sense within:
He sees high visions unalloyed
With any mystery of sin.

Faint forms from out the parted lands
That seek redress from human laws,
Stretch forward supplicating hands
And bid him labour for their cause.

He walks beside God's hidden streams;
He muses on Man's Right and Wrong;
Of all the wide World's worth he dreams:
He wakes, and gives them back a Song.

1889.

TO MODERN RHYMERS

'Poet! I come to touch my lance with thine.'

TO MODERN RHYMERS

To Arthur Symons.

Poets ! I come to break no lance with you.
Be yours the lingering rhyme remembered still
In years to come, albeit by the few :
But as for me, I have no charmer's skill
To strike the chords that, yet a-sleeping, will
Place one beside the happy glorious dead.
I have no strength to blow a blast to fill
This England glutted with the healthy bread
Of Liberty and Equal Right. I tread
A lowlier, silent, older path alone,
And, challenged, hardly dare to raise my head.
I sit apart and watch you. When we 're gone
And men would paint the poets then no more,
Then may some ask : Who sits there by the door ?

London, *July* 1892.

PASSION AND FRIENDSHIP

PASSION AND FRIENDSHIP

So pale, Night watcher, rounded to the morn
  And hanging southwards, a forgotten thing,
  Like a last lamp left at a banqueting
Still found aflare at cease of flute and horn.
There lies beneath you Southwark labour-worn,
  Nay ! if it slumber ever, slumbering
  While we, who wait, our mantle closer fling,
And, speck by speck, creeps up the day new born.
So pale, my brother, with this vigil night,
  Seeking strange glories by this sullen stream,
    While clock to clock calls forth from City towers?
Look eastward, eastward ! Yonder comes the light !
  Leave we our converse here, our fairy dream—
    Lo, through the long day's labour, love is ours.

THE TEMPLE STAIRS,
26th March 1889.

CONTINUAL COMFORT

'*Continual comfort in a face.*'

MATTHEW ROWDON.

CONTINUAL COMFORT

From the dark came we, to the dark return—
  My soul and thine, O brother. For a space
  We wander through this glorious dwelling-place
Wherein the lamps of daily labour burn.
And as the hearts of passionate lovers yearn
  For dearest lips that hold Life's biding grace,
  So when I look, O brother, on thy face
I have no need of other love to learn.
From the dark came we. Need is none to prove
  Or this or that, that scouts the mind's control.—
    Suffice it wholly if we serve Our Lord
And Love; if, like those flitting birds, we move
  Across Life's hall, tenacious of our soul,
    And see the feasters at the banquet-board.

1888.

O'ER LONDON TOWN

ROUNDEL

O'ER London town the dawn is breaking now;
The lights in street and casement sink a-down,
And morning rises with her pure, pale brow
O'er London town.

Sick men take heart to see her purple crown
Rise in the east; the homeless turn and bow
To watch the weaving of her azure gown.

Brave souls rejoice, lost ones recall their vow,
Rich men sleep sated on their beds of down;
To each dawn sends her message—she knows how—
O'er London town.

1887.

ROME

' Toi, qui de Rome, émerveillé, contemples
L'antique orgueil qui menaçait les cieux,
Ces vieux palais, ces monts audacieux,
Ces murs, ces arcs, ces thermes et ces temples.'

JOACHIM DU BELLAY.

ROME

Moving among the monuments of Rome—
  This side and that an empire in decay—
  As flies the bow-string, memory flits away
And brings us back to sudden thoughts of home.
Then at the moment perished Cæsars come
  Or some great Pope in newly-won array
  And, passing by without a moment's stay,
Bid us reseek some citadel or dome :
—Till I remember, set among fair streams,
  A city where the world is ever young
    And where new Life prepares her for the fray ;
And all her towers come back among my dreams
  Bringing the words unconscious to the tongue,
    'There would I lay my bones at end of day.'

Rome, *Easter* 1892.

BEFORE A MIRROR

BEFORE A MIRROR

I

You bring to life glad days gone by;
Dear heart, those silent eyes adorn
With brighter stars the midnight sky,
With dearer light the new spring's morn.

For in your heart the world is young,
And Life, an open plain, spreads out
To your less erring mind and tongue
With many pleasant meads about.

(And not long-tried and found in vain
This way and that the pathway lies
Blurred over with the blinding rain
And lost before we realize.)

II

O Love, the crystal moments pass:
The quick days pass above our head.
Not long we lift Life's phantom glass;
Not long before the happy dead

Receive us, caught from death's alarm
And resting on, forever, now.
—Dear God, protect this heart from harm,
From every taint this marble brow.

And let the victory be for him,
While we, unnoticed, work and pray
And, shattered in the mind and limb,
Sometime, forgiven, pass away.

ROME, 1892.

AT A BANQUET

AT A BANQUET

HERE, at the banquet, in this company
Seated, while round the shafts of Laughter fly,
  Truly the wise man called it Solitude:—
Truly, for here are only you and I.

1892.

TO TWO FRIENDS

TO TWO FRIENDS

A SICILIAN OCTAVE

LIKE this poor weed I lie beneath your feet,
And watch you wander onward hand in hand :
Over your heads the stars in heaven meet,
And trace about your forms a golden band.
Trample upon me, happiness complete,
And crush me in this desolate brown land.
You make the barren fen so sweet, so sweet—
O lovers, lovers, I can understand.

1892.

PORTRAITS

I

JOHN BEAUFORT, DUKE OF SOMERSET

WIMBORNE MINSTER

Long time we fought, firm-faced, against the foe,
Guarding the lilies of the fair far France
Against the shafts of adverse circumstance
That brought upon this man what all men know.
Ah, Aquitaine! where late the roses blow
The sweetest, e'en in warrior's mischance
Ours once again! And Norman valiance
That Cressy and that Agincourt could show!
Sweet, art thou there! Bide patient, Margaret.
Sooth, who can tell what after us shall be?
Rest we in peace whatever may befall.
Pray Mary's Grace: God's judgments are not yet.
Reach me thy hand: and mine, O Love, for thee.
Now may we sleep until His Trumpets call.

1890.

II

SHAIKH MUSLIHÚD-DIN SA'DI

DIED, A.H. 690, A.D. 1291

Six hundred years since good Shaikh Sa'dí died,
That bowed himself in prayer at Yah'ya's side:
Six hundred years, and still the sages kneel,
And still men question of the Crucified.

'Fourteen to Mecca? Fourteen did he make,
Journeys, you tell me, for the Prophet's sake?—
What profit then to kneel at Yah'ya's side?'
—Ah, Friend. What Sa'di did, will *you* mistake?

Rests he beneath his roses, would you know?
Ask at Shiráz, ask of the pilgrims. Lo!
They stand beside his sepulchre. Ah me!
As he once stood by Yah'ya's long ago.

1891.

III

MARGUERITE OF ANGOULÊME

BORN, APRIL 11, 1492.

LADY, the curious tale of pleasant mirth,
The jest demure or bold that fills your page,
Are fallen from us in our sober age,
And make us love the moment of your birth.
For now a newer spirit walks the earth :
Oisille and Parlamente no more engage
Dull hours at Cauterets—labour and wage
Have made your court at Nérac little worth.
Yet, *Marguerite des Marguerites*, you knew
That hearts were wider than all creeds, and took
True men to love you both in life and death.
Marot, Melanchthon found their rest with you,
Rabelais wrote for you his great third book,
Your *Myrour* held in trance Elizabeth.

ROME, *April* 1892.

IV

CALIPH MANSÚR

Caliph Mansúr, so this old legend goes,
Possessed a magic mirror wherein rose
  At his behest, if he their strength would seek
Unseen, the subtle features of his foes.

Come, be the tinker, Omar, make amends;
Make me a mirror which such features blends.
  Mansúr may gaze upon his enemies—
Be mine to look, O Omar, on my friends.

1892.

V

RICHARD BARNFIELD

(1547-1627)

THIS wood-clad sinuous champaign! By my gate
  Watching the shadows race on Tittensor
  And the faint sunshine upon Meaford pour
Muse I upon my solitary state
Nowise dissatisfied. Nay, nor elate
  Bethink me of those days that were before,
  Glad days, glad days that now shall be no more—
Youth's days and springtide who shall separate?
Hast thou forgotten, gold-haired Ganymede,
  How I endeavoured, long ago, to move
Thy heart asleep with my poor ill-tuned reed?
  Hast thou found others to more worthy prove?
Or, careless shepherd, is it still thy creed:
  'Thou lovest to be loved, and not to love'?

STONE, *April* 29, 1893.

SONATINA POETICA

SONATINA POETICA

I

'In the field of the meadow-sweet.'
GEORGE MEREDITH.

WE lay beneath the shadow
In the full sun's summer shine:
The breeze passed o'er the meadow
Across thy lips and mine.

One Love we grew, one-centred,
In the full sun's summer shine:
It seemed as though nought entered
Between thy lips and mine.

One Life we were, one-hearted,
In the full sun's summer shine:
Until, at last, nought parted
Thy lips, thy lips and mine.

II

'Weit und breit iſt die Zeit,
Breiter viel die Ewigkeit.'

You sleep beneath the snows, love,
Beside the silent town;
O'er you the aspen grows, love,
And near the stream flows down.

Here all the busy day, love,
The noise of tumult roars.
Time holds us in his sway, love:
Eternity is yours.

III

I. SUMMER IN WINTER

THE wind sweeps down the frozen street,
The sun is hid, the clouds are gray;
But since Love guides our wandering feet
'Tis summer in the world to-day.

2. WINTER IN SUMMER

The world is fair and warm the day,
The Sun shines in the cloudless sky;
But since dear Love has fled away
'Tis Winter now in mid-July.

IV

'Ever you sing of Love: Is Love Life's End and Beginning?

'Ever I sing of Love: Ever I counsel of Life.'

ON A COVERLET

ON A COVERLET

To Herbert P. Horne.

THESE are the angels looms have made
For one whom willing threads obeyed,
Who caught amid material things
The vision of their hidden wings,
And heard, transfixed, one strain remote—
The burden of their trumpet-note:
Whose are the haloed heads that lie
About me for Night's company.

—What if around my couch of sleep
A thousand myriad angels keep,
And they should come, as they may dare,
Seeing themselves foreshadowed there?

Shall I not watch in dreams anew
To see them tremble into view—
Nor wait, where'er my footsteps fall
To catch, far-off, their trumpet-call?

1889.

THE RUBENS ROSE

'J'ai voulu ce matin te rapporter des roses.'

DESBORDES VALMORE.

THE RUBENS ROSE

O LOVELY rose! I gathered you
When Love and I together lay.
I saw you in her eyes of blue—
So long ago as yesterday.

Ah rose! upon my desk you stand,
Now she has vanished from our sight:
But you keep something of her hand
And ravish me with fresh delight.

Ere you have bloomed and faded, rose,
Perhaps, perhaps—but who can tell?—
She may be here again,—who knows?—
She may be here, and all be well.

1888.

CHRYSANTHEMUMS

CHRYSANTHEMUMS

Falling leaf and faded flower
Bring anew the autumn hour;
And the white mists earlier rise
Where the filling river lies;
Gathered is the golden grain:
But the gold flower comes again.

Blood-red sets the autumn sun
Now the year's best work is done.
Chillier beat the autumn rains
Falling on our colder veins:
But the season mocks the year,
For the blood-red bloom is here.

White, pure white, ye come once more,
Chrysanthemums, about my door.
Each year when the rest have passed
Ye come again at last, at last.
Ah ! come ye back with pure delight !
And let me dream of you at night.

1889.

THISTLEDOWN

THISTLEDOWN

I so lonely, and you so near,
And never a word between us, dear.
Clouds for sun and grave for gay,—
All for want of a word to say.

TO HER GARDEN

TO HER GARDEN

This little spot holds all my care.
  This low-built red-brick wall encloses
Than any flower a form more fair,—
  For there my own dear love reposes.

And ever as I pass that way
  The very wall-flowers seem to glory
In knowing all that I would say,
  And criticise our simple story.

Within, she heeds them not at all
  The while, her girlish train about her,
She walks. Beyond this weed-clad wall
  I pass, who cannot live without her.

'Mid all her friends serene she moves,
Nor shows by any blush nor dimple
That which this tiny letter proves—
The secret of our love so simple.

And be she grave or be she gay,
Let me not press my love upon her :—
I only know that yesterday
I gave her all my heart and won her

A SONNET

A SONNET

To Ernest Dowson.

ERNEST, What holds your heart and care to-night?
  Is it some antic tale of Eastern lore,
  Some world-lapped legend seldom heard before,
Or some new genius sprung at last to light?
Is it some tale that you yourself indite,
  Some pleasing fancy newly cradled, or
  Perhaps a child's laugh toddling to your door,
That makes the autumn evening's glimmer bright?
These, or perhaps the long gas-laden street,
  With gathering of friendship for an hour,
    Or haply silent musing on Men's ways?
Or eastward is it that your footsteps beat
  Working, while others round you starve and cower?
    Come, send me burthen of your nights and days.

CAMBRIDGE, *Nov.* 1889.

TO J.

TO J.

DEMANDING AN INSCRIPTION IN AN 'OMAR KHAYYAM'

HASTE, Jack, to write your name in yonder book:
And yet write not, for when you are anear
No need there is of pen and ink to cheer
Our greeting. And yet write, for herein, look,
There is upon this page a tempting nook
Where you shall hum a quatrain clear and dear
To him who holds your gift in after-year:—
Write it, I swear you shall by hook or crook.
Nay, write it not, for what may prove to be
Most perfect is most fittest. So put back
Our Omar, *sans* inscription, on the shelf.
What need is ours of further poetry
When all our lifetime we've possession, Jack,
Of one more perfect poem—of yourself?

A GAME OF BOWLS

A GAME OF BOWLS

'JACK'

To E. C. Marchant.

Light of step you fled away
Across the velvet grass that day.
Watching, we strove to follow you,
With skill of bias, two and two.

Some have wandered far afield
Mis-spent by an impetuous arm:
Others prosperously reeled
Into the circle of your charm.

That lumbering fellow stands and stares
Distant a foot's space more or less,
And filled with self-sufficient airs
Lives ignorant of happiness.

This other waiting still afar
Turns his full gaze to where you are,
And mourns across the parting plain
He cannot have his time again.—

Of me one half has gone astray
And on the gravelled desert died :—
The other half found out the way
And, dribbing, tumbled to your side.

1892.

A COAT OF ARMS

A COAT OF ARMS

WERE I a herald I would trick your arms,
  Ronald, by all the properest of rules,
So that mankind might know your various charms:
  A heart of argent in a field of gules.

And lest perchance by any single one
  The blazoning should not be understood,
Read it, I pray: A heart of simple stone,
  And weltering in all your lovers' blood.

March 1893.

TO F. P.

A GAME OF BOWLS

TO MUSIC

TO MUSIC

Long time I wandered 'mong the arts to find
  One that with true perfection should express
  All the World's conflicts, all the storm and stress
Of Man's experience, heart, soul, and mind;—
Hope, Joy, Sin, Sorrow, Prayer, Despair, combined,
  And Love, and Hate, and Trust now passionless.
  But each one failed. Nor Arch nor Painting's dress
Nor Poem's rhythm brought what was designed.
Then I found Music: and the World that seemed
  Before to escape Man's questioning, began
    To shadow forth from many parts one whole;
And all that one before had only dreamed
  Stood forth, eternal, now revealed to Man,
    And uttered what the Soul said to the Soul.

1891.

TWO DEDICATIONS

I

To Hermann von Brodorotti.

Lost Love it was that brought us two together—
Was it not?—
Closer than e'er before, in one June weather;
And the knot
Which bound us then was this same song we made,
For hearts commanded, and our hands obeyed.

We found a poet's rime that told of loving.—
Here it is!
You traced the words and I the therewith moving
Harmonies:—
We took the naked sorrow of Love's wrong,
And clothed it with the raiment of a song.

II

To J. H. B.

(1)

PROLOGOS

TAKE, for the sounds that are thine I have sent thee,
Sprung from a word that I caught on thy lips,—
Wine in a cup that a reverie lent me
And Memory sips.

Take though the song be unworthy the singing,
Wedded to words that are thrice divine,—
Chords that I strove to make worthy the stringing
As chords that are thine.

(II)

EPILOGOS

Labour of night that was labour of leisure,
Caught in a trance at the ivory keys,
Labour of love that was labour of pleasure
And labour to please,

Cast from the Cavern of Memory's keeping,
Messengers now o'er the parting sea,
Go ye to hearts that are weary of weeping,—
As message from me.

PUCK

PUCK

PLAYFUL mood, I wander up and down the river,
Shouting in the sunshine, running on the bank,
Quirking mirth and laughter, jesting at the Giver,
Ripe for any kisses, up to any prank ;

Then at dead of night-time, world and men asleep,
Raise my eyes above me at the One Side Riven,
And I know that ever in my heart I keep
Thanks to the Eternal and the thought of heaven :

Like a child who sporting round his father's chair,
Plays a game of frolic father may not see,
Then, another moment, coming unaware
Takes the place unquestioned on his father's knee.

LONDON, *29th Aug.* 1892.

PŒNITENTIA

PŒNITENTIA

The brazen trumpets clang and bray
Above God's golden House to-day,
The saffron-scented torches flare
High up upon the dancing air,
And everywhere new echoes fall
Most rapturously musical :—
It seems as though High Heaven were bent
Upon some new-wrought Sacrament.

With lute and lyre they hie along,
With flute and pipe the angel throng ;
While here the sound of violins,
Responding to their call begins,

And dulcimers so lightly played
Join in the chorus that is made.—
O what hath chanced in Dome and Hall
To bring them thus to festival?

Gaudium est in cœlo, hear
Strains immortal strike the ear,
Super uno peccatore
Pœnitentiam agente.
Gaudium! the chorus sings
Loud above the cithern strings,
And high above the petulant drum
Angels answer, *Gaudium!*

1892.

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM

F. H. M.

VERSES, in scholars' fashion, I pin upon your pall
For the music that was in you, the music you held so dear;
And now that you have gone beyond the white notes' call,
And yours may not bring us back to hand and eye and ear—
Take these last long lines as the splendours of autumn fall
And the scholar throng is gathered, O scholar, about your bier:
Vanished is sudden light, and hushed are the sweet songs all,
Do you waken in your deep sleep? Do you listen in what high sphere?

THE ORDINATION OF A GREEK PRIEST

THE ORDINATION OF A GREEK PRIEST

To György Suba.

Once in our life we met, soul to soul, and face to face,
When anointed hands were set on thee in the Holy Place.
—What if we never greet, save at the Throne of Grace?

Easter 1892.

AD FONTES AQUARUM

'Un homme qui venait de pays très lointains
Me dit : " Dans ma patrie il est un temple encore."'

CATULLE MENDÈS.

AD FONTES AQUARUM

I WAITED for one True Love.
I thought that I saw it pass:
But it fled unshriven like a vision damned
In an old magician's glass.

I waited for one True Love.
I sought in the land of dreams.
I sought long years: but I found alone
The echo of echoed streams.

I waited for one True Love.
I roved into lands afar.
I said: I will gain what these may teach.
I found but a falling star.

I waited for one True Love.
I sought in the vale of creeds.
They spoke to me of another World
And drove me back into deeds.

I waited for one True Love.
I traversed the fields of Song,
And I found therein a release from Sin,
But not from a world of Wrong.

I waited for one True Love.
I toiled both early and late,
And ever the echo came again,
Bidding me wait and wait.

And ever, O Perfect Love,
I wait, though I shall not see
In living form what I languished for,
Which is Life and Breath to me.

And nought in the world rests sure,
Save this—will it make a creed?—
Ever I thirst for one True Love—
True Love that is God indeed.

1892.

Que ton vers soit la bonne aventure
Éparse au vent crispé du matin
Qui va fleurant la menthe et le thym . . .
Et tout le reste est littérature.

PAUL VERLAINE.

NOTES

P. 35. Bacon's Essays, *Of Friendship*, 'For a Crowd is not Company; And Faces are but a Gallery of Pictures.'

P. 39. *Senecio jacobæa*, Linn. Ragwort.

P. 44 l. 2. St. John the Baptist's tomb at Damascus. See *Gulistan*, i. 10.

L. 9. Bustan, iv. 16.

P. 45 l. 9. *Les Marguerites de la Marguerite des Princesses.* The Queen's poems, etc., were published under this title in 1547.

L. 14. *Le Myrouer de l'Ame Pecheresse.* Translated by the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards Queen.

P. 47. *The Affectionate Shepherd*, 1594.

P. 55. Verses made upon a design, executed in stamped velvet, by Herbert P. Horne, Esq.

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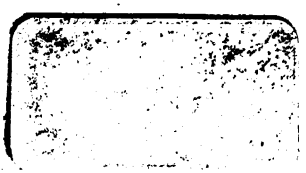

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